

The *Historian*

of Hancock County

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

FEBRUARY 1995

MARDI GRAS IN THE BAY

Local Mardi Gras customs, past and present, are the subject of our next luncheon meeting, set for noon on Thursday, February 16 at the Lobrano House on Cue Street, Bay St. Louis.

Our featured speaker, Ames Kergosien, will talk about Mardi Gras in the Bay.

Make reservations early since we must order food. Price \$5. Call 467-4090.

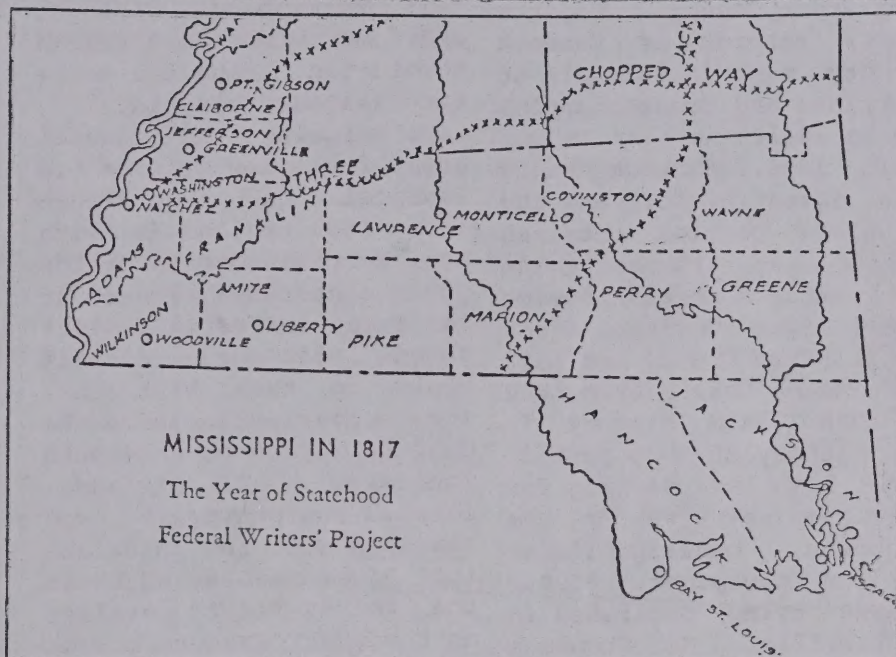
PRESIDENTS COLUMN

From its inception, our founding members declared their intention that the Hancock County Historical Society would never limit itself to recording the history of a select group within its population, so "COUNTY HISTORICAL" became our middle names.

Throughout the 1700s, the area between the Pearl River and the Perdido was won/lost several times and, it was briefly (for 74 days in 1810) a foreign country.

In 1813 President Madison declared it to be a part of the Mississippi Territory, dividing it into the three coastal counties, Mobile, Jackson and Hancock. By 1817 Mobile County was

(Continued on page 2)



MISSISSIPPI IN 1817

The Year of Statehood

Federal Writers' Project

DURING THE REVOLUTION

French was the language and customs of the approximately 500 people living along the Mississippi Sound from the Pearl River to the Pascagoula about 1775.

These descendants of the original settlers lived at Pascagoula and up river, at Old and New Biloxi, around Bay St. Louis and up the Wolf River, with such still familiar names scattered thinly, occupying huge tracts of land, as Ladner (spell it as you will), Morin, Couevas, Saucier, Boisdore, St. Martin, etc.

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A COLLEGE FOR THE BAY?

[Following are excerpts of a proposal prepared by Abraham R. Ellery and Eleazer W. Ripley on behalf of the Trustees of Hancock College. It was presented to the U. S. Congress in 1818. A nice try, but Congress showed no interest in endowing a college at Bay St. Louis.]

That the legislature of [Mississippi], at their last session, incorporated the said College; and your memorialists, in pursuance of a vote of the trustees, pray for it an endowment of two townships of land, to

(continued on page two)

PRESIDENT, from page 1 assigned to the area that became Alabama. Hancock and Jackson became the sole Mississippi coast counties until 1841 when the area was halved and Harrison was cut from Hancock. Harrison was later divided (January 6, 1916) to form present-day Stone County. So, the early records of Hancock County must include all of Harrison and Stone counties up to 1841.

In 1890, Hancock County was again cleft, and the southern portion retained Hancock as its name while the northern portion became Pearl River County. Since Pearl River County was part of Hancock County from 1812 to 1890 THEIR history is OUR history at that period.

We have been working for some time now with Mr. Tom Stephens, owner/publisher of the newspaper, PEOPLE HELPER being published in Poplarville. Mr. Stephens has expanded his office to include the PEARL RIVER HISTORICAL GROUP, and has proposed to our Board that this group, while retaining its present name, become a branch of the Hancock County Historical Society as may pertain to that part of their history when they were in Hancock County.

This would enhance our ability to research north Hancock County and give us a core personnel to work with in that area.

We will bring this matter before the general membership at the next meeting on February 16 for discussion before it comes to the Board for vote.

Charles Gray, President

REVOLUTION, from page one

A great hurricane in 1772 similar to the power of Hurricane Camille in 1969 had swept 30 miles inland.

With no aid from the "outside," the people surviving were undoubtedly still trying to restore their homes, implements, live stock, boats, clothing and food when the American Revolution along the eastern seaboard erupted.

Politically the coastal area from New Orleans to Pensacola had been French from 1699 to 1763-65 with the British obtaining the government when France at the Treaty of Paris in 1763 ceded all her colonial empire to them. West Florida boundaries included the Gulf of Mexico on the south including all islands, lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas and the Mississippi River as far north as the thirty-first parallel on the west. Eastern boundary was the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola rivers. The following year the northern boundary was moved northward to where the Yazoo River entered the Mississippi at present day Vicksburg. Spain received the Isle of New Orleans. [From Mississippi's Gulf Coast During the American Revolution by M. James Stevens for the Mississippi Coast Historical & Genealogical Society, ca. 1970.]

MAE KING TUDURY

The Society marks the passing of Mrs. Tudury, civic activist, who died on January 24 at age 93.

COLLEGE, from page one be located in said state of six miles square each.

...Congress are aware, that the population of this section of the union is heterogeneous in its character; France, Spain, and England have possessed, alternately, the several portions of the country; and it, at length, has passed into the hands of the American government, and become identified with the American union. Each of these political vicissitudes has left its traces upon the inhabitants of the same country, and implanted all the national varieties of the people from whom they were descended. Hence, in language, manners, habits, and institutions, there are no common standards, but all are marked with a general diversity. In this state of things, it is important for the national government, by a system judicious and conciliatory, to reclaim the elements of society from the chaos which surrounds them; to impart to the rising generation, the principles of morals on which our social institutions repose, and to afford them the rays of intelligence, which can alone appreciate their worth.... It is admitted that the task is difficult; but consequently, the more glorious will be its achievement....The most important step to be taken to accomplish objects of such importance is the endowment of a literary institution on the borders of the Gulf of Mexico; removed to

CIVIL WAR DAYS - HANCOCK COUNTY AND VICINITY
COMPILED AND EDITED BY CLYDE CUCULLU
HISTORIAN - HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sec. of Navy Gideon Welles at Washington May 14, 1861 to
Flag Officer WM. Mervine, appointed to Command Gulf
Blockading Squadron then at Boston, Mass.

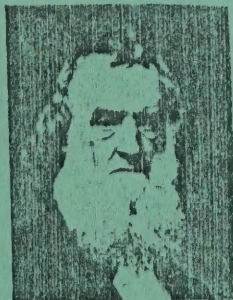
Sir: You will hoist your flag on the Mississippi and
proceed with her, with all despatch practicable, to the
Gulf and carry into effect the instructions issued to you
on the 7th instant.

The Colorado, which is preparing as your Flagship, will
follow you at the earliest date possible. The following
additional vessels will be under your command, most of
which are at present in the Gulf, viz.:

Steam frigate	Niagara
Steamers	Brooklyn
	Powhatan
	Mohawk
	Crusader
	Huntsville
	Wyandotte
	Water Witch
Sloop of war	St. Louis

Other vessels as they are equipped will be ordered to
proceed to Key West and report to you for
instructions. The Sabine at present off Pensacola,
has recently been ordered to Portsmouth, N. H.

GIDEON WELLES



RESERVE COLLECTION
Gideon Welles

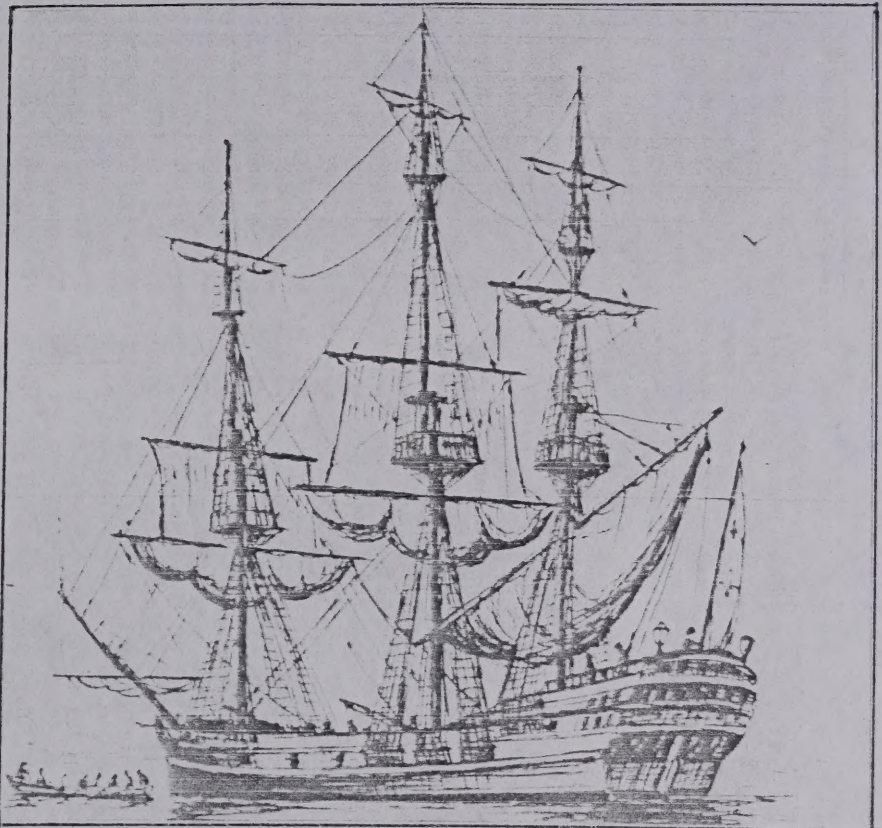
a convenient distance from the allurements of a great city....

In this quarter, a course of education to form but one character, should be predicated on this circumstance; to conciliate mutual prejudices, and sooth mutual pride, the two languages [French and English] ought to be taught in common to the rising generation....

In this manner, before many years shall have elapsed, the young pupils will grow up with the same dialects....

They will appear on the theater of life as members of the same community; they will press forward in one path as statesmen, citizens, warriors; they will pant with the same hopes, and be actuated by the same feelings. Indeed, as they would be one in manners, habits, and language, all jealousies will subside, and their prejudices become lost in the paramount character of American citizens.

Such are the view, and such the motives, which have induced a number of respectable citizens to combine their efforts in establishing a College at the Bay of St. Louis, in the state of Mississippi. It is on the Florida shore of the Gulf of Mexico; salubrious and pleasant, about six hours sail from the city of New Orleans, and twelve from Mobile. It is a common retreat, in summer, from the diseases of the cities; and unites all advantages. [Thanks to Dave McDonald for contributing this document.]



SIEUR D'IBERVILLE'S SHIP "LE MARIN" 1699

THANKS

A \$500 donation to our building fund in memory of former Society president Larry Heller has been made by Larry Timmerman, former vice president, who now lives in Seattle, Wash.

Our computer collection has been enhanced by a donation from Jim Henrie.

Thanks to the Diamondhead Community Association for a \$50 donation.

LIVE OAK REGISTRATION

We are registering live oak trees with a minimum diameter of 36" and circumference of 113."

For details, call Irwin Cucullu at 467-6252.

HOMES TOUR POSTPONED

The Tour of Homes that we announced last month will be delayed until June. Stay tuned.

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

Mon. 8 to 4 Thu. 8 to 4
Tue. 8 to 4 Fri. 2 to 4
Wed. 2 to 4

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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or
Mail - POST OFFICE BOX 312
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi 39520

Hancock County Historical Society

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